

One Year Ago in Figure Four Weekly plus ordering information
by Bryan Alvarez

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One Year Ago in Figure Four Weekly
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Mick Foley, one of the greatest wrestlers of this or any other generation, apparently ended his in-ring career after a loss to Hunter Hearst Helmsely in a Hell in the Cell Match this past Sunday at the WWF No Way Out PPV.

Foley, who gave his word on Smackdown that he'd never appear in the ring as an active competitor again if he lost, did the job to a Pedigree shortly after taking a Nestea plunge bump through the top of the cage. The ring was gimmicked to break away and Foley bumped onto some sort of huge mattress under the ring. The bump looked spectacular, but Foley said it was so heavily gimmicked that it didn't feel much different than any other normal bump.

The story of Mick Foley and his influence on this sport cannot be written at this time. Although he probably won't wrestle any more matches in the future, he is expected to return as a regular TV performer sometime in the near future, perhaps as new WWF Commissioner. Because this retirement match didn't have a happy ending, it's expected that Foley will probably end up special guest referee for the WrestleMania main event, awarding the WWF Title to Rock in the end. In other words, while his in-ring career may have ended, he's not going anywhere anytime soon.

It's hard to decide whether to be happy or sad about Foley's retirement. On one hand, his body is so broken down and battered that it's almost a relief to see him put an end to the abuse he has endured trying to please the fans for so many years. On the other hand, after watching his interview on Smackdown and his recent big show matches, I found myself very sad about the fact that this guy is just so damn good, but is pretty much forced to call it quits at 34.

Foley's influence on pro-wrestling cannot be denied, but it's also a strange paradox. Anyone who has ever known Mick Foley knows he is one of the nicest guys in the entire world, much less in the twisted world of pro-wrestling. Yet he has influenced a generation of backyard wrestlers who take pride in throwing themselves onto thumbtacks and hitting each other with brain cell killing chairshots. His original Hell in the Cell match set a standard too high for anyone to safely try to measure up to, although in this business you can almost be certain that somebody, someday, is going to try to one-up it. It's strange to think that Rock, who is currently the biggest wrestling star in the world, took a bump Thursday through sugar glass onto a big safety pad, but all the backyard wrestlers are more interested in gigging themselves and taking bumps off high places. Foley himself seemed to realize this near the end, and began to focus

more on comedy and his unique personality in the ring. He also made it very clear in interviews that children should not try to recreate his stunts at home. Whatever his influence on this sport ultimately ends up being, it's obvious Foley never intended to create a style that would bring harm to others.

There are questions that will have to be answered several years down the road, but for now perhaps we should just celebrate a man who worked hard, realized his dream, and saved enough money to be able to retire comfortably in his mid-30s.

The main event was the highlight of what ended up being a pretty good pay-per-view.

1. Kurt Angle d. Chris Jericho to win the WWF Intercontinental Title. Both guys got lots of mic time before the match. I'm not sure if that was the main reason, but the crowd really got into this match. Crowd chanted "Angle sucks!" Ross made a funny comment when he noted that the fans were free to chant whatever they wanted because of the First Amendment. Apparently the First Amendment does not protect WCW T-shirts, but that's another story. Angle went to work on the arm and turned a couple of nearfalls into armbars. The crowd kind of knew what to think here. Near the finish, Angle hit his Olympic Slam (that's what they're calling it) but Jericho kicked out. Angle got pissed and went to get his belt. The referee grabbed it allowing Jericho to put on the Lion Tamer. Crowd went crazy for this. Angle made the ropes. They brawled outside and Jericho hit Angle, who bonked into Chyna. As the referee checked on her condition, Jericho threw Angle into the ring and went for his quebrada. Angle lifted up the belt and Jericho landed face-first on it, leading to the pin. After the match, Earl Hebner ran out and argued with the original referee, Tim White, but the decision was not changed. Remember this. Really good match. ***1/2

2. Damn Dudleys beat New Age Outlaws to win the WWF Tag Team Titles. Billy Gunn injured his shoulder giving Bubba Ray the Fame Asser on Smackdown, so he barely did anything during this match. Road Dogg got beat on for a long time. He finally made the hot tag and Billy ran wild with one arm. Billy hit the Fame Asser on Bubba but got pulled outside by D-Von. D-Von nailed Billy in the shoulder with what was described as a steel pipe to explain his injury. Damn Dudleys then hit Road Dogg with a dope 3D for the pinfall. WHOO-HOO! I could have thrown a Damn Party here. Outlaws argued a bit after the match. *1/2

Angle was shown backstage partying with some fans near the concession area. I love celebrations in wrestling.

3. Mark Henry beat Viscera in a Special Added Match. Ross alerted us that Mae Young was still with child. This match had less than no heat. Henry took two hard bumps into the steps, one of which was noggin first. "BORING!" the rubes screamed. Viscera told the referee to count Mark out, then immediately threw him back into the ring. Mae Young finally ran out, and, wouldn't you know it, the cameras all broke and we got to look at a blank screen for like 30 seconds. Somewhere in here, Mark pinned Viscera. There was a huge pop because this was over. It was horrible, but probably the best match there will ever be between these two particular guys. 1/4*

Jericho threatened to ruin Angle's party. What a dick.

4. Edge & Christian d. Hardy in a Disappointment Match. My favorite manager ever, Terri, returned in a tight outfit as the Hardy's' manager. Yippee! Acolytes came out to offer protection for Terri. Match was good, but not nearly as good as probably everyone — most of all these four — expected going in. Everyone who was watching with me was shocked with the lack of reaction this match got, perhaps forgetting that there was no reaction for their ladder match either when it took place. Sloppy in parts, but everyone was trying really hard. Maybe too hard. Finish saw Jeff go for the senton bomb, but Terri jumped up and **SHOVED HIM OFF THE TOP ROPE**. That whore. Jeff bumped into the dasher boards and almost ended his life. Terri then slapped Matt allowing Christian to hit him with a Tomikaze for the pin. Hardy tried to beat up Terri afterwards but the Acolytes made the save. Jeff jumped too early for a Faarooq powerbomb, so Faarooq decided to drill for oil with his head. Brutal. I thought this was the end of Jeff for real this time. **3/4

Pig Show cut a promo. He was sad that everyone booed him all the time. Show apparently thought he'd get cheers if he showed more footage of Rock hitting the floor first at Royal Rumble. This did not work.

5. Tazz beat Big Bossman—DQ. Prince Albert ran in within seconds. They pummeled Tazz but he kept trying to fight back. Bossman even broke the nightstick over his head at one point, which dragged this match out of Negative Star Zone. Not that I condone nightstick shots to the head or anything. DUD

Angle continued to party.

6. X-Pac d. Kane in a No Holds Barred match. Ironically, I don't believe even one hold was applied. Kane appeared none the worse for wear after being shot in the face with a bazooka gun just days earlier. They brawled everywhere. Some good heat and some stiff shots. At one point, X-Pac went for a chair but Bearer grabbed it and pummeled him. Tori then tried to attack Bearer, but he chased her away like she was a 12 oz. cut of prime rib. I like Paul Bearer, and in some ways he's my hero, but for God's sake is he still ever a fat man. Kane went for a tombstone but X-Pac slithered out and applied an X-Factor, which is a move, not a hold. Kane sat up and ran wild. Kane chokeslammed X-Pac, but Tori jumped on his back. Kane tombstoned her. Decent pop for that, but nothing like they got on Smackdown. Kane went to grab the steps, but X-Pac kicked them and they literally fell on Kane's head. X-Pac then basically sat on them as the referee counted three. Pretty good match, odd little finish. **3/4

7. Too Cool & Rikishi d. Radicals. Eddy tried to do a run-in with a pipe early, but Rikishi caught him and punched him in the bad elbow. That wasn't very nice. Too Cool were in control for a long time until Rikishi got his hoof clipped. Scotty tried a worm, but Malenko cut him off with a clothesline, which was an awesome spot that drew great heat. Some really cool double-team moves by the Radicals. Rikishi finally made the hot tag and ran wild. He hit the Asbury Park Driver on Saturn. Grandmaster begged Scotty to do the worm, which he did to a big pop.

Radicals hit the ring but Benoit took a belly-to-belly from Rikishi. Christopher hit a legdrop on Saturn, but Benoit broke it up with a diving headbutt. Rikishi finally ended up in the ring alone with Malenko. An Asbury Park Driver and Ass Splash later, it was over. Good match. Too Cool and Rikishi danced afterwards. ***

8. Paul Wide d. Rock to win a title shot at WrestleMania. I'm not making this up. They brawled all over in the crowd. Both Rock and Show took some uncharacteristically hard bumps. Pretty good heat throughout, although the crowd didn't respond much to the nearfalls, probably because they thought for sure that Rock was going to win. I know I did. Ref Earl Hebner took a bump and Show hit the chokeslam. Tim White ran out to make the count, but Earl, who apparently was still pissed about the Kurt Angle decision, pulled him out of the ring. White and Hebner actually got into a fight. Suddenly, "No Chance in Hell" began playing and the crowd went APESHIT. Shane McMahon ran down to ringside. Rock hit a chairshot and went for the People's Elbow. Shane suddenly jumped into the ring and threw the chair right at Rock's face, turning heel. Nuclear heat for that. Show made the cover and Earl counted three. Great swerve, although we all know Rock will end up going to WrestleMania. **1/4

Backstage, Jericho and Chyna attacked Angle and threw him into the trunk of his own car.

9. Hunter Hearst Helmsely beat Cactus Jack in a Hell in the Cell match to retain the WWF Title. Craig and I said a prayer before this match. No sooner had we uttered this prayer then the camera literally zoomed in on a huge sign that read: "FOLEY WILL DIE". That was very disturbing. The cage was totally reinforced with about twenty locks on the door, to get over the idea that nobody was getting out. Fans at the event live said paramedics were stationed around the ring just in case anything went wrong. Match started with a brawl and Cactus took some hard bumps into the steps. Hunter then picked them up and THREW THEM at Foley's head. My stomach hurt throughout this whole match. Hunter hit Foley right in the head with a chairshot. Thank God this was the only one. HHH took a slingshot into the cage and giggered himself. Crowd was rabid for the juice. Cactus hit a chair-assisted elbow drop to Hunter on the floor, to which the crowd chanted "FOLEY!" Foley threw the steps at Hunter, but they missed and — shockingly — tore a hole in the wall of the cage. How about that. Cactus rammed through it and started bleeding from the arm. Looked like a blade job but who knows. Crowd popped huge for the escape route. They brawled outside. Cactus hit Hunter with a tombstone on the US announce table. Foley started climbing the cage but Stephanie stopped him. Bless her heart. Cactus decided instead to go over to the timekeeper's table, where he found a barbed wire bat. Timekeeper must have thought Hartford was a tough neighborhood or something. Cactus nailed Hunter once in the head with the barbed wire. I think this was real because I didn't see a switch anywhere, and the barbed wire was legit for sure later because it kept getting caught on Foley's shirt. Hunter climbed up to the top of the Cell to escape. Foley followed. Hunter managed to get possession of the bat, and he hit Cactus in the head with it as he was climbing. Cactus took the Shawn Michaels' bump off the cage through the Spanish table. "ASSHOLE!" the fans screamed at HHH. I felt better at this point because I thought that was it for the stunts. Unfortunately, Cactus got to his feet and started climbing again. They brawled on top of the cage for awhile. Cactus gave HHH a double-arm DDT and then lit the board on fire. He hit Hunter with a pretty

weak shot to the head with the burning board. Not that it should have been harder or anything. He went to piledriver Hunter onto the burning board, but Hunter backdropped him out of it. The top of the cage broke and Cactus took the same Nestea Plunge bump he took in the first match, but this time the ring broke and he landed on what appeared to be a mattress under the ring. When I saw him flying through the cage, I literally thought he was really going to die for sure, but when I saw the landing it was like the greatest thing I'd ever seen in wrestling because I knew he was OK and he'd never be doing something like this ever again. "HOLY SHIT!" the crowd screamed. Hunter climbed down into the cage. Foley slowly got to his feet to a big pop. Hunter then Pedigree'd him for the pinfall. After the match the cage raised and Hunter left a bloody mess. EMT's came out with a stretcher but Foley refused to get onto it. He slowly walked to the back with tears in his eyes to a growing ovation. Finally, he raised his arm in the air and everyone went crazy. Then the screen faded to black. ****1/4

Ratings

Not much of note in the ratings this week except that the Tank Abbott vs. Sid experiment was a disaster. Raw scored a 6.50 rating off hourly numbers of 6.54 and 6.43. Nitro scored a 2.60 composite off hourly numbers of 3.02 and 2.11. In other words, when Nitro ended absolutely nobody switched to Raw, and in fact Raw's second hour was down from the first hour, which is a bit surprising. Head-to-head it was 6.5 to 2.2, which is embarrassing to say the least. Sid vs. Tank drew a 2.7. Other ratings for this week saw Smackdown draw a 4.9, Heat draw a 3.2, ECW on TNN draw a 1.2 and Thunder draw a 2.13.

Last week's Monday Night ratings, which were delayed due to the Holiday, saw Raw score a 5.94 composite off hourly numbers of 5.63 and 6.24. Nitro scored a 2.80 off hourly numbers of 3.14 and 2.30.

Internet Quote of the Week

"I just read that Ric Flair's back cancer came back and he had to get his back amputated, that's why he is gone from WCW."

Special Thanks

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WWF News and Notes

- WWFE released their third quarter earnings report this past Tuesday. The big news was that revenues increased over 50% from \$65.2 million to \$98.4 million, which means WWF is on its

way to a \$400 million year. All this great news resulted in the stock shooting up a whole 1 and 3/8 to close at 13.

- Congratulations to Chris Benoit and his girlfriend Nancy for the birth of their new son, Daniel Christopher Benoit. The little Crippler was nine pounds, nine ounces at birth.

- Shawn Michaels appeared on "The Edge", a public access cable show in San Antonio last week and confirmed our report from a few weeks ago that his wrestling career was over for sure. He said his main concern right now was to be a good husband and father. He said seeing his child born was a bigger rush than performing in front of 60,000 wrestling fans. He said his favorite moments in wrestling were becoming World Champion, because it was an acknowledgment by his peers that he was the best, and his retirement, because nobody had ever done it for real before. He hyped up his school and said the main eventers of tomorrow would come from his Academy.

- Even though I hate football, there is a lot of football talk this week. It turns out the XFL might end up with some competition as NBC and Turner Sports may be about to announce the formation of the Fan Football League, which would start play in March 2000 with games airing on the PAX Network and possibly NBC. We get PAX around here and I swear all they ever air is Little House on the Prairie, so I assume there should be room for some football. Host cities are expected to include Washington, Atlanta, Chicago, New York, New Orleans, Houston, Los Angeles, Seattle, Sacramento, Boston, Philadelphia and either Miami or Orlando, whichever is more fan friendly. In another funny XFL story, WWFE announced last week that they were thinking about bringing a franchise to Cleveland during the second season. The reason this is so funny is because they haven't even named all the host cities for the first season, and they're already making plans for the second. In what may or may not be coincidental timing, Jeff Giles of the Canadian Football League (which Vince tried to buy at one point) announced last week that the league might expand into the United States next year.

- Saturn ranted about Hogan on his website again this week. He said he didn't hate Hogan, but he hated a lot of the things he's done for the sport including holding back younger talent. He said there was a spot for Hogan, but it was definitely not at the top. He also noted that attention to detail is the biggest difference right now between WWF and WCW.

- Rock was on Bubba the Love Sponge last week and plugged his Saturday Night Live appearance on March 18. He said he'd love to wrestle Hogan and drop the People's Elbow on him.

- Speaking of Rock, the producers of the film "The Mummy" want him to play a half-man, half-scorpion heel in the sequel which is due out next May.

- Saturn was told to take Godfather out with a spear in his Raw match last week, but didn't want to steal Goldberg's move since they were in Atlanta. He clipped Godfather's leg instead, and in doing so strained his trapezius muscle. He didn't miss any action.

- Bradshaw was on CNBC's Squawk Box show this past Monday talking about his stock portfolio. He appeared in a suit and tie as John Leyfield. He noted that his investments grew 73% in 1998 — his first year investing — and 88% in 1999. He said he learned a lot from his dad, who was head of a bank. Bradshaw did note that he bought some WWFE stock, which means he might not be that smart after all.

- Bob Holly vs. Crash Holly vs. Test for the Hardcore Title was scratched from the PPV after Bob tore some rib cartilage last week.

- There may be a lawsuit in the works regarding "Beyond the Mat". The WWF already banned the producers from using the names of any WWF superstars on posters for the movie, although legally their likenesses can still be used. An ad campaign was set to begin this past Monday on Raw, but WWF refused to let any of the ads air. Vince also apparently told the wrestlers that anybody caught saying anything positive about the movie would basically be finished with the company. Vince was not pleased with the fact that the movie didn't have a "happy ending" and that guys like Mick Foley were portrayed as real people who got hurt and had children who were affected by what they saw in the ring. I guess the WWF wants people to believe that their characters are superhuman like Wile E. Coyote (who isn't even human now that I think about it) and never get hurt, and this movie shows the exact opposite. The WWF's official reasoning is that they've always banned ads for "competitive wrestling programming" from their TV shows.

WWF On Television

WWF Smackdown (February 24 — Taped February 22): Crash was shown yelling at Bob Holly backstage. Bob said the Hardcore Title had been named after him, and didn't want Crash fighting for it. Crash shoved him down... Crash Holly d. Test to win the WWF Hardcore Title. Pretty decent little match with lots of innovative hardcore spots. Crash sure takes a beating. Bob hit Test with a chair for the finish, although he looked like he was aiming for Crash. Bob then decided to celebrate with Crash. Well that makes no sense... Gaint came out and said he was sad that the fans were booing him. He showed footage of Rock's feet hitting the ground first at Royal Rumble. In a shocking twist, this did not result in the fans cheering him. Kurt Angle came out. He shook Show's hand and said he understood. Angle yelled at the people for booing Show. He was about to tell a story about how he'd been screwed back in 1992 when Jericho came out. Jericho yelled at them both. Angle challenged Jericho and a partner to face himself and Show in the main event. Rock came out to a big pop and offered to be Jericho's partner. He said Show was right, his feet had touched the floor first. He then showed footage of himself imitating Show. In slow motion, I might add. This was pretty funny... An awesome Hell in the Cell promo package aired. Amazingly, there was no footage of Bossman vs. Undertaker... Chris Benoit DCO Kane. Kind of disappointing. After the match, Tori distracted Kane allowing X-Pac to shoot him with Chyna's bazooka gun. During the tapings, the gun didn't go off the first time so they had to come out later in the show and try to shoot Kane again. The miracles of post-production... Malenko & Saturn & Head Cheese d. Edge & Christian & Hardy. This was pretty good while it lasted. Hardy got into an argument with Edge and Christian afterwards

setting up the PPV... HHH & Road Dogg & X-Pac d. Too Cool & Rikishi clean when X-Pac pinned Grandmaster. HHH destroyed Rikishi's ankle with a chair after the match. Some pretty good stuff... Godfather & D-Lo Brown d. Bossman & Prince Albert. Decent. Tazz attacked Bossman and Albert leading to the finish... Ross interviewed Cactus Jack. This was one of the best promos you'll ever see. It was basically a retirement speech and Foley was visibly all shaken up. He said he was a man of his word, and said if he didn't win the match at No Way Out he was never ever going to step into the ring as an active competitor for the WWF again. He thanked everyone and got a tremendous reaction. This was so awesome, yet so sad for so many reasons. After the promo, Stephanie came out and had Foley arrested for defacing the DX bus on Raw. Great heat for that... Backstage, the cops put Foley in a "holding cell". It ended up being a shark cage. Hunter walked in and the cops gave him the keys, revealing this to be a trap all along... Mr. Ass d. Bubba Ray Dudley—DQ when D-Von ran in. Dudleys attacked Billy afterwards but Road Dogg made the save. Billy put Bubba through a table with a Fame Asser, which may have been the most athletic thing he's ever done in his life since he literally jumped almost two feet straight up to pull this baby off. Unfortunately, he tore out his shoulder on the landing... A MONSTERS OF RAP commercial aired again. Does this CD ever look cool. It deserves a plug for sure: 1-800-731-3773... Show & Angle d. Rock & Jericho—DQ. Jericho has the charisma of several men, and Rock has the charisma of the entire US population, but together as a team they had the charisma of negative the whole world. Weird. Chyna ran in with a chair for the lame finish. Jericho and Angle brawled after the match and Jericho put him in the Lion Tamer. Show and Rock brawled backstage and Show threw him through a plate glass window. The glass looked like it was made of sugar and Rock bumped onto a nice big pad. He is the smartest guy in wrestling, I tell you... Show ended with Hunter tying Foley, in the shark cage, to the back of the DX bus and driving away. It didn't look nearly as dangerous as it sounds here. Hunter said he wasn't going to stop driving until he got to Hartford, which was kind of a goofy way to end the show.

Raw is War (February 28 — Live): Hunter and Stephanie came down to the ring looking surly. "FOLEY!" the yahoos chanted to no avail. Hunter said he was sad. He said he had more respect for Foley than anyone else he'd ever met in his life. "WE WANT FOLEY!" Stephanie looked at Hunter like he was out of his mind. Hunter told her this was a guy thing. He said he had created a special video tribute for Mick and pointed to the TitanTron. The tribute video started out really nice, but suddenly turned into a Best of DX Beating And Humiliating Cactus Jack video. Hunter and Stephanie laughed in a depraved manner. Shane and Big Show then came out. Fans initially popped for the music again, expecting Vince. Shane said he'd aligned himself with Big Show, the future WWF Champion. There was an awkward pause here as if someone forgot to hit Rock's music. Rock came out. He guaranteed he was going to WrestleMania and winning the WWF Title. Hunter said Rock was going to have to start over at the bottom, and signed him to a match with Brooklyn Brawler. Shane said there was no chance of Rock going to Mania... Hardy challenged Acolytes to a match. They ended up winning clean-as-a-shizzeetski in a decent match. Jeff looked off. Surprising finish... Kurt Angle came down to the ring and issued an open challenge for anyone to take his UK Title. Rikishi accepted. Rikishi totally beat the hell out of him the whole match, so Angle got himself counted out. Chyna and Jericho came out and shoved him back into the ring, where Rikishi gave him the Asbury Driver and the Ass Splash. Radicals

came down and attacked everyone, but Too Cool made the save. After the match, Too Cool convinced Rikishi, Jericho and Chyna to do the dance with them. Monster pop for that. All five danced as they went to break... Saturn challenged Jericho to a match later... Terri bounced down to the ring to do commentary. She said she dumped the Hardy's because they only went to visit her in the hospital twice a week. Sorry Craig. Edge & Christian d. Head Cheese after Terri distracted Blackman. There were "WE WANT HEAD CHEESE!" chants during this bout... Brooklyn Brawler beat Rock clean by turning a Rock Bottom into a small package. The crowd was totally stunned by this. Rock destroyed Brawler after the match and hit him with the People's Elbow. BWAHAHAHAHA! I made every single bit of that up. Rock killed Brawler in seconds and then called out HHH. Hunter headed down to the ring, but Stephanie and Shane stopped him. Shane said no match would occur. Stephanie then said Rock could win a title shot at WrestleMania only if he pinned Show or Triple H in a handicap match in the Raw main event. Hunter said this was Rock's absolute last chance... Jericho beat Saturn when Chyna interfered. Pretty disappointing match with some really messed up spots... Dogg got into an argument with Billy backstage regarding their upcoming tag match. Dogg wanted X-Pac to replace Billy because of his shoulder injury. Billy was pissed. Hunter came in and said he'd handle the situation. He said Dogg & X-Pac were going to team up together. Billy got into Hunter's face and started screaming at him, so DX beat the stuff out of him. In real-life, Billy will be out three months after rotator cuff surgery... Mark Henry NC Crash Holly. Mae Young ran in at the finish and asked permission to beat up Crash. She gave him a big splash and then started selling her stomach. EMTs hit the ring as Mae screamed "My baby, my baby!" She was taken away on a gurney. At this point, I was sure this was among the dumbest angles in all of wrestling history. After commercial, it was revealed that Mae was in labor and about to give birth. I decided not to try to figure out how a 76-year-old woman could deliver a baby after being pregnant for only two months, much less how a 76-year-old woman could even get pregnant in the first place. Paramedics said they would deliver immediately since there was no time to get to the hospital... Tazz d. Chris Benoit—DQ when Albert and Bossman ran in. Way too short. Bossman and Albert pummeled Tazz but he kept fighting back. He stopped fighting back when Albert gave him his "whirlybird maneuver" onto a chair. I swear Ross said this... Backstage, Mae refused to deliver until she got a cigar. The doctor, who is actually an actor on the Conan O'Brien show, asked her when the last time she had her period was. She said 1957. Doc suspected that maybe she wasn't really pregnant. What a sleuth. After a long comedic struggle, Mae finally gave birth to — are you ready? — a human hand. I know some of you lost faith in the truthfulness of this review when I reported that Brooklyn Brawler beat Rock, and I know that sometimes I am wont to make up stories, but I swear to God on a stack of Bibles that this one is true. She gave birth to a hand. In other words, two months ago, in Vince's demented mind, he came with an angle where Mae Young at 76 would become pregnant and, in the end, give birth to a full-grown human hand, all so that Pat Patterson in the big punchline could state: — I am also not making this quote up — "Let's give Mae a hand". Wow. This was the dumbest angle ever. When I think back to other dumb angles, like the midget blowing up Sting's boat or Bossman feeding Al Snow his dog or Giant surviving a fall off Cobo Hall, I can at least struggle to suspend disbelief. In real life, a midget really could try to blow up someone's boat. In real life, I'm sure someone really has fed a dog to someone they didn't like. In real life, a guy could get damn lucky and survive a fall off a tall building into a lake (even though there was no lake within miles of Cobo Arena, I could at

least suspend disbelief and picture him landing in a big cartoon-style bucket of water). But how in the name of God could you give birth to a hand? Yet another first by the WWF and Vince McMahon... X-Pac & Road Dogg NC Damn Dudleys when Kane ran in to get X-Pac, and ended up chokeslamming everyone else instead... A Mick Foley tribute video aired set to "I Will Remember You". The WWF has done a lot of fantastic music videos in their day, but this was probably the best ever, with the possible exception of "Tell Me a Lie". Fans gave the video a huge standing ovation and many were crying. Awesome stuff... Rock d. Pig Show & HHH in the main event via DQ when Shane McMahon ran in, so Rock doesn't get to go to WrestleMania this week. Bad guys totally punked out Rock and left him laying as the show ended. Very strange to see two WWF shows without a "happy ending". Maybe Vince will ban his own show now.

WWF On Tour

Little Rock, AR (February 23): Godfather d. Viscera, Christian d. Crash Holly, Edge d. Prince Albert, Too Cool d. Headbangers & Head Cheese in a three-way, Kurt Angle d. Chris Jericho—DQ, Kane d. X-Pac, Jackie d. Ivory, Rikishi d. Bob Holly, Acolytes d. Dudleys, Rock d. Big Bossman.

WCW News and Notes

- Hulk Hogan was back on Bubba the Love Sponge's radio show last week ripping on Saturn. He said he'd make more money this year alone than Saturn would make in ten. I guess Hogan realizes he won't be making as much money this year as he has in the past, since he was originally telling people that he'd make more this year than Saturn would make in his whole career. He also said Asya was more muscular than Saturn. Hogan then cried about how sad he was to see Chris Benoit leave the company. He said he used to fight with Bischoff to keep Benoit strong on TV when Sullivan was trying to bury him. Hogan said he was in the ring with Benoit several times and thought he was a real talent. You know, I can count on one finger the number of times I remember seeing Hogan and Benoit in the ring together, and if I'm not mistaken Hogan just beat the hell out of him the whole time. I am quite certain the Yellow Bastard never took one chop. Hogan's comments were probably in response to a column Benoit wrote on his new website (www.ChrisBenoit.com) in which he ran down Hogan and said it was time he stepped aside and let the younger guys take over the business.

- The Tank Abbott experiment ended Monday when Sid made him tap to a crossface. Personally, I think they should have given Tank a little more time before giving up on him, but it's too late now because he absolutely cannot be rebuilt at this point. From watching the match it's obvious that unless WCW is the most incompetent promotion in the history of this business, all plans for Tank vs. Goldberg at Starrcade this year are off. If Tank had KO'd Sid there would have been a chance, but now it's hopeless. There were two factions in WCW last week battling over what to do with Tank. One group wanted to push him to the moon and the other wanted to bury him. Apparently, the group that wanted to kill him off gained a lot of strength when he pulled the knife on Big Al at SuperBrawl. The story there was that he asked Sullivan before the

show if he could use any weapons, and Sullivan, thinking Tank meant pro-wrestling weapons, said the match was No-DQ and he could use whatever he wanted. Tank was not thinking about pro-wrestling weapons, and just happened to have a switchblade on him, and the rest is history.

- There were meetings with WCW over the weekend regarding the long-term direction of the company. Brad Siegel again made it very clear that once Goldberg returned the company must be built around him.

- Buff Bagwell wrote on his website last week that his contract was up on March 1st, and if WCW didn't pay him what he deserved, he was going to quit and go to the WWF. It is shocking that Bagwell would ask for a pay cut in such a public forum. Bagwell also said in a chat on the site that Vince flew him and his wife out to New York and promised him the world. Buff said Rock was the best entertainer in the WWF, but only until he arrived. Bagwell may just be BS'ing in order to try to get a better deal when his contract comes up, because flying to New York to talk to Vince sure sounds like tampering to me.

- Scott Hall was diagnosed with a spinal bruise and will be out of action for at least three weeks. You can make of this what you will, but Hall is telling people that the injury scared the hell out of him and he's "seen the light" so to speak. He said he was going to quit drinking and start life all over again. Anyone who has ever had a problem with alcohol can tell you that it takes a bit more than just deciding you're going to quit to do so.

- Because it would make no sense, there is talk of making Big Al Tank's bodyguard in WCW.

- Shane Douglas appeared at an XPW independent show over the weekend and reformed the Triple Threat with Chris Candido and Tammy Sytch. He went into a long tirade directed at WCW, and we were told it was the same tirade he does every time he gets pissed.

- Scott Steiner was threatened with a six-figure fine or a three-month suspension without pay after an incident two weeks ago where Steiner allegedly made a physical threat towards Ric Flair in the parking lot. Steiner ended up meeting with WCW officials this week to discuss the situation, and the word at press time is that he'll probably be back sooner than anyone thinks.

- Bret Hart's in his Calgary Sun column this week talked about how sad he was that Chris Benoit left WCW. He praised Chris like crazy and offered him three pieces of advice for the future: "Save your money, have fun, and most of all don't get hurt".

- Sonny Onoo has already been interviewed for an upcoming 20/20 piece on his WCW racial discrimination lawsuit.

WCW On Television

Wednesday Thunder (February 23 — Taped February 22): Nash arrived at the arena in a wheelchair accompanied by two dumb nurses. Mike Graham walked up to him and asked if he

was OK. The nurses said he had a "slight" case of amnesia. It was so slight that he couldn't even remember his own name or who he was. Graham reminded Nash that he was Commissioner. Nash said he had some "commissioning" to do and wheeled away. The acting here, particularly by Graham, was horrific even by pro-wrestling standards... Fit Finley beat Evan Karagias in a hardcore match. Shannon and Shane got involved and took a beating for their troubles. This was SO AWESOME. Thank God WCW hasn't gotten rid of Finley yet like they did to Regal... Backstage, Nash decided he was Commissioner Gordan. He said he wanted to see Batman... Gene interviewed Jeff Jarrett backstage. Gene noted that the fitness models weren't on their feet very often... Someone with the Kidcam filmed Bagwell hitting on Daphne backstage. She turned him down by screaming in his ear and running off. Tenay said Daphne should have been in *Scream 3*, which may have been the worst joke in TV history... I'll bet Bagwell tells all the other guys that he had Daphne screaming... Flair came out and made fun of Reno. I got thinking about something when I remembered that Flair's 51st birthday was just a few days ago. Had he been born on February 29th during a leap year, he'd only be twelve years old right now and have a long career ahead of him. Flair said he wanted an opponent for Thunder. Vampiro came out and accepted the challenge. This was a really good segment and Vampiro was understandably excited to get this opportunity... David questioned Daphne backstage about Bagwell. He said he'd seen the footage. If he'd seen the footage, why would he be questioning her, because it was obvious she turned Bagwell down?... Backstage, Nash called "Alfred" looking for Batman. They cut to another area backstage where Ralphus answered the phone. Crowd popped huge for that. How the hell did Ralphus end up with a cell phone, and what was his number doing on Nash's automatic dial?... La Parka d. Berlyn. Nothing of note except this was probably done because of the racial discrimination lawsuit... Bagwell and Kidman argued backstage about where the KidCam was... Tank cut a promo and was interrupted by Shane or Curly Bill or Vincent or whatever his name is this week. He said Tank almost killed his career. What career? He challenged Tank to a fight later. He then told Gene that he was no longer Shane, Curly Bill or Vincent. He was "Mike [pause] Jones". If it is possible for there to be a negative pop in wrestling, this got one... Buff Bagwell d. David Flair with a reverse DDT. Maestro attacked Buff afterwards. I wonder if Maestro stole the KidCam?... Why doesn't Kidman just buy a new video camera?... Tank beat Mike Jones with the worst punch of his career in seconds... Nash met with Ralphus backstage... Flair d. Vampiro with the Figure Four after Luger ran out and hit Vamp with a bat behind the referee's back. They later reversed the decision and gave the win to Vamp. They were trying to recreate Flair vs. Sting from thirteen years ago, but the difference is that Flair vs. Sting didn't go ten minutes, include a run-in by Luger with a baseball bat, and have Sting do the job. Other than that, this was pretty similar. Both guys worked really hard, although Vamp looked a bit nervous. Flair can still go for an old dude... Dustin cut a charisma-lacking promo. He was angry. He got some OK heat saying he was going to "kill" Terry Funk. Funk appeared on the big screen and said he was going to beat up Dustin. Dustin got angry at these comments and proceeded to beat up the ring crew. This was OK... By the way, Dustin still comes to the ring to the same music he was going to use when he was doing the Undertaker gimmick that he hated. No wonder he's angry... Mickey Jay asked Terry Taylor permission to kick Mark Johnson's ass. Taylor said OK. Imagine at a real job if you could ask your boss permission to beat up a co-worker you hated, and he said OK... Artist d. Crowbar. Paisley and Daphne got into a fight during this match. Daphne does a pretty damn

good job for someone who has never had any training. Artist almost killed Crowbar with a superkick at the end... Lane and Idol got into a brawl with the Mamalukes backstage leaving Disco to face the Wall. Wall killed him. This was actually good while it lasted, but it only lasted two minutes... Harris Twins d. Kidman & Booker T. Clean with the H-Bomb I might add. Kidman obviously just doesn't care anymore. And WCW wonders why guys keep wanting their releases. Harris Twins do not need to be in this spot... Sid d. Luger—DQ. This was horrible to a comical degree. Every single move they did exposed the business more than when Vince McMahon testified in New Jersey that wrestling was fake. Flair ran in but Sid beat them both up. Luger finally used the bat for the DQ... They cut to backstage where Mickey Jay tried to stop Jarrett from going to the ring. Jarrett gave him a guitar shot. Apparently, this brought to an end any hope of having a Mickey Jay vs. Mark Johnson main event. Oh well, there's always next week.

WCW Monday Nitro (February 28 — Live): Sid and Tank both arrived, which was a shock to me since I assumed one or the other would no-show when they heard the finish to the main event... Jarrett arrived and told Mike Tenay backstage that he didn't care what happened in the main event. He also hinted he'd do a run-in... Mamalukes d. Idol & Lane. Both Disco Inferno and Miss Hancock did commentary. Hancock ended up distracting everyone by doing one hell of a table dance. After Mamalukes got the win, they invited her into the ring to dance. She went in there, but the celebration was ruined by those bastard Harris Twins. They gave all three of the Mamalukes H-Bombs. After the destruction, the NWO music played and everyone stood up to see who was coming out, forgetting that the very not-over Harris Twins are in the NWO and it was their music that was playing. Hilarious... Tony promised that Sting was going to be there... KidCam caught Bagwell hitting on Liz backstage. She turned him down... Riki Rachtman (or however the hell you spell it) was shown at Ohio State preparing for Spring Breakout, traditionally the most fun-filled Nitro of the year. Unfortunately, it will not be at Club LaVela this year, which means they probably won't have a floating ring, which means nobody will probably be tossed into the pool, which means the show will suck and WCW can kiss my ass... A taped Hogan promo aired and he was booed out of the building even though he wasn't in the building to begin with. Hogan said he wanted a strap match with Flair at SuperBrawl... Gene interviewed Flair and Luger. They ran down Hogan and Sting. Luger challenged Buff to a match later for hitting on Liz. They made fun of Minnesota which resulted in Curt Hennig coming out on the ramp. Sources in the building say this might have got the biggest pop of the night. Hennig challenged Flair to a match later. Hennig said if he couldn't beat Flair, he'd run buck-ass naked down the street next week. For some reason the crowd popped big for that threat... Booker NC Kidman when the Harris Twins ran in. Yes, that is exactly what the fans want to see. How can WCW not be winning this ratings war?... Harlem Eat cut a promo... Smiley challenged Dustin Rhodes for later... Three Count danced and then challenged Knobs to a handicap match for the Hardcore Title. Knobs killed all of them forever but they still managed to pull off a win with a Pig Pile of Death. Could be a fun angle. I've given up on title lineages... Knobs and Finley cut a promo. If you are wondering, no, it makes no sense why they are together again. Knobs wanted a rematch... Dustin Rhodes beat Norman Smiley. Pretty bad... Jeff Jarrett beat Vampiro. Some good false finishes with the Harris Twins getting involved. Jarrett finally got the win clean after Vamp missed a splash. They did about as good a job as they could trying to keep Vamp strong but still allowing Jarrett to retain the US Title. Vamp is right at that midpoint where a strong push

will cement him as a major player, but a few losses will kill him off... Finley attacked Vamp during a break. Nothing against Finley, because he rules the world, but the fans don't consider him a headliner and he's the wrong guy for Vamp to be feuding with at this point... Nitro Girls danced. David Flair ran in and danced with them, pissing Daphne off. David kissed her literally all over and they made up. The Artist d. David Flair. Highlight was Paisley and Daphne getting into a catfight. In a shocker, David noted in a recent radio interview that he sometimes feels lost in the ring... Sid was shown being tended to by EMTs backstage. Someone had hit him with a guitar... Mamalukes sent Harris Twins a fish... Gene interviewed Sid and said doctors had ruled that Sid not do anything strenuous that night. Like Sid has ever done anything strenuous in his life. Sid said he'd still fight... Shat came out and danced. Maestro's classical music played and he came to the ring. I thought he had to listen to rap from now on? Symphony had a boombox with her, and during the Shat vs. Maestro match she played "Can't Get You Out Of My Heart" and held the microphone up to it. Maestro went crazy and hit Shat with the boombox for the pin. I can't figure out what the funniest thing about this angle was. The fact that this aired in an opposed quarter, the fact that the announcers couldn't identify the music, or the fact that when Maestro grabbed the boombox and broke it over Shat's head the music continued to play over the PA. Total, utter disaster, and this is coming from the Shat's biggest fan... Flair pinned Hennig after a low blow. I guess Hennig has to run buck-ass naked down the street on Nitro next week. WCW sure knows how to draw those 18-34 year-old male viewers... Bagwell d. Luger—DQ when Flair ran in. Flair and Luger beat on Bagwell until Sting ran out to make the save. Sting got a huge pop. All night Tony had been promising that Sting was going to be at the show. Here's my question. Had Luger and Flair not attacked Bagwell, what was Sting going to do on the show?... Tank rode a motorcycle down to the ring. Sid beat Tank via submission with a crossface. Tank beat on Sid forever, but in the end Sid no-sold it and put Tank in the worst crossface of his career for the win. Visualize how bad that crossface must have been if it was the worst of Sid's career. OK, this one was worse than the one you visualized. Match was atrocious, but it was probably the absolute best match possible involving these two doofuses. Hey, Tank, if you read this, I wasn't talking about you. Sid counts as two doofuses. Overall a pretty bad Nitro.

WCW On Tour

Winnipeg, Manitoba (February 25): Artist d. Kidman. Highlight was Torrie and Paisley getting into a catfight. YAY! Ron Harris d. Mike Rotunda, Fit Finley & Brian Knobs d. Wall & Norman Smiley, Buff Bagwell d. Curt Hennig, Bret Hart came out and cut a promo, Jeff Jarrett d. Vampiro, Sid d. Lex Luger. Sid had no belt or wrestling gear due to a screw-up at the airport.

Duluth, MI (February 27): Artist d. Kidman, Norman Smiley d. Fit Finley, Rick Steiner & Mike Rotunda d. Harris Twins, Knobs d. Wall & Bam Bam Bigelow in a three-way, Curt Hennig d. Buff Bagwell, Jeff Jarrett d. Vampiro, Sid d. Lex Luger.

ECW News and Notes

- Chris Candido and Tammy Sytch got their releases from ECW again last week. They apparently were given the releases on two separate occasions, but lost the paperwork both times. If that's not weird enough, they were scheduled to pick up new paperwork last

Wednesday but no-showed the meeting with ECW's lawyer. They claimed they were selling their house at the time. So anyway, they're free now and expected to be in WCW shortly.

- Sabu was back to work this past weekend (see ECW on Tour). Friends say he was not at all happy in the locker room. Paul Heyman is telling people he is back with the company and won't be going anywhere soon.
- Spike Dudley, who has never missed an ECW event due to injury, screwed up his knee last week. He is telling friends that he's not going to get surgery until after the PPV, which was originally scheduled to be Mike Awesome vs. Spike vs. Masato Tanaka in a three-way for the title. As of this past weekend, nothing was settled as to the PPV line-up, including the main event, which is a little disturbing since the show is two weeks away.

ECW On Television

ECW on TNN (February 25 — Taped): This show opened with Cyrus already in the ring. He talked about Rob Van Dam being stripped of the TV Title. "You're a bitch!" the crowd chanted. Rhino, Steve Corino and Jack Victory all came out. Cyrus said that tonight on the show they were going to hand the belt over to Rhino, TNN's hand-picked champion. Cyrus demanded Paul Heyman come out and bring the TV Title with him. Cyrus added that he wanted a cup of coffee as well. Heyman eventually came out with the belt and got in the ring. I would like to add that he was actually hugging the strap. Cyrus demanded Paul hand over the belt, but Heyman refused to do it. Cyrus did the old "GIVE IT TO ME!" routine which of course ended with Heyman giving it to him right between the eyes. Rhino responded by goring Heyman. The bad guys stomped on Paul until Sandman's music played. Sandman hit the ring about as fast as you can hit the ring drinking beer and waiting for a five-minute song to play all the way through. Sandman NC Rhino when Tajiri ran in and sprayed mist in the eyes of Sandman. The bad guys stomped a mudhole in Sandman until Super Crazy made the save. This match was not very good at all... Doring and Roadkill challenged the Dupps to a Loser Leaves Town match. Dupps are going to the WWF for those of you wondering. Doring & Roadkill SQUASH Dupps. Over in seconds... A Beyond the Mat commercial aired and it sure looked cool... Dreamer came down to the ring and called out Raven. Francine came out instead. She said Raven didn't DDT her on purpose the week before and told Dreamer to drop his attitude. If he dropped his attitude he'd have nothing left. She chewed him out for a long time. Impact Players came out and said they just wanted to watch the fight. Dreamer challenged either of them to a singles match. They said they wanted a tag bout. Dreamer said that was cool with him, and said he was going to team with someone out of the crowd. Francine then grabbed the mic and said the match was on, and Dreamer's partner would be Raven. Dreamer didn't look too happy about that decision. Raven ran out and the match started. Even though they hate each other, Raven and Dreamer worked together on occasion. Dreamer finally hit a DVD on Storm through a table, but Dawn Marie broke up the pin to set up the weekly TNN catfight. This time, when Francine went for the bronco buster, Dawn kicked her in the — well — vagina and Francine sold it. Dreamer grabbed Dawn in preparation for a piledriver. James Vandenberg, whose ECW name according to Joey is apparently "That Guy", then ran down and gave Raven some powder. Raven accidentally threw it into Dreamer's eyes.

Dreamer then grabbed Francine on accident and DDT'd her. Raven heroically carried Francine to the back for some First Aid and a hummer, leaving Dreamer all alone to get his ass kicked. He was pinned after a stuff tombstone on a chair. Really good angle, decent match... Show ended with That Guy cutting a promo hinting that maybe Dreamer was the bad guy in this whole love triangle. Not a bad show.

ECW On Tour

Toledo, OH (February 25): Chris Chetti & Nova d. New Dangerous Alliance, Little Guido d. Kid Kash & Simon Diamond, Masato Tanaka & Tommy Dreamer d. Dupps, Mike Awesome d. Angel, New Jack d. Vic Grimes, Sabu d. Mikey Whipwreck, Raven d. Steve Corino, Sandman & Super Crazy d. Rhino & Tajiri.

Cincinnati, OH (February 26 — TNN Tapings): Danny Doring & Roadkill d. FBI, Yoshihiro Tajiri d. Mikey Whipwreck, Rhino d. Jazz (?), Super Crazy d. CW Anderson, Nova & Chris Chetti & Kid Kash d. Baldies, Sabu d. Scott D'Amore, Mike Awesome d. Rhino, Tommy Dreamer & Masato Tanaka d. Impact Players to win the ECW World Tag Team Titles. Francine and Raven turned on Dreamer, leaving him all alone in a handicap match. Tanaka came out, teamed with Dreamer, and they won the belts.

Etcetera

- Make sure you check out the "Off the Top Rope" radio show if you live in the Chicago area, hosted by our good buddy Brian Schenk. It currently airs from 7:00 to 8:30 AM on WEEF AM 1430 every Saturday morning. Brian is also selling tapes of his show, and you can receive a sample copy for \$2 to PO Box 6082, Lindenhurst, IL 60046. For more information, you can e.mail Brian at his new e.mail address: offthetoprope@mailcity.com.
- Thanks for reading this week!

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